

# THE HOUSE OF A THOUSAND CANDLES

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON  
AUTHOR OF "THE MAIN COURSE," "THE DANCE," "THE  
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## CHAPTER X.

An Affair With the Caretaker.  
I read in the library until late, hearing the howl of the wind outside with satisfaction in the warmth and comfort of the great room. Bates brought in some sandwiches and a bottle of ale at midnight.

"If there's nothing more, sir—"  
"That is all, Bates." And he went off sedately to his own quarters. I was restless and in no mood for



Her Brilliant Cheeks Were a Delight to the Eye.

bed, and mourned the lack of variety in my grandfather's library. I moved about from shelf to shelf, taking down one book after another, and while thus engaged came upon a series of large volumes extra illustrated in water colors of unusual beauty. They occupied a lower shelf, and I sprawled on the floor like a boy with a new picture book in my absorption, piling the great volumes about me. They were on related subjects pertaining to the French chateaux.

In the last volume I found a sheet of white note paper no larger than my hand, a forgotten book mark, I assumed, and half crumpled it in my fingers before I noticed the lines of a pencil sketch on one side of it. I carried it to the table and spread it out.

It was not the bit of idle pencilling it had appeared to be at first sight. A scale had evidently been followed and the lines drawn with a ruler. With such trifles my grandfather had no doubt amused himself. There was a long corridor indicated, but of this I could make nothing. I studied it for several minutes, thinking it might have been a tentative sketch of some part of the house. In turning it about under the candelabrum I saw that in several places the glaze had been rubbed from the paper by an eraser, and this pliqued my curiosity. I brought a magnifying glass to bear upon the sketch. The drawing had been made with a hard pencil and the eraser had removed the lead, but a well defined imprint remained.

I was able to make out the letters, N. W. & C.—a reference clearly enough to points of the compass and a distance. The word ravine was scrawled over a rough outline of a doorway or opening of some sort, and then the phrase:

THE DOOR OF BEWILDERMENT.

Now I am rather an imaginative person; that is why engineering captured my fancy. It was his efforts to make an architect (a person who quarrels with women about their kitchen sinks!) of a boy who wanted to be an engineer that caused me to break with my grandfather. Fate was busy with my affairs that night, for, instead of lighting my pipe with the little sketch I was strangely impelled to study it seriously.

I drew for myself rough outlines of the interior of Glenarm House as it had appeared to me, and then I tried to reconcile the little sketch with every part of it.

"The Door of Bewilderment" was the charm that held me. My curiosity was thoroughly aroused as to the hidden corners of the queer old house, round which the wind shrieked tormentously. I went to my room, put on my corduroy coat, took a candle and went below. One o'clock in the morning is not the most cheering hour for exploring the dark recesses of a strange house, but I had resolved to have a look at the ravine opening and determine, if possible, whether it bore any relation to "The Door of Bewilderment."

All was quiet in the great cellar; only here and there an area window rattled dolorously. I carried a tape-measure with me and made measurements of the length and depth of the corridor and of the chambers that were set off from it. These figures I entered in my notebook for further use, and sat down on an empty nail keg to reflect. The place was certainly substantial; the candle at my feet burned steadily with no hint of a draft; but I saw no solution of my problem. I was losing sleep for nothing; my grandfather's sketch was meaningless, and I rose and picked up my candle, yawning.

Then a curious thing happened. The candle, whose thin flame had risen unwaveringly, sputtered and went out as a sudden gust swept the corridor.

I had left nothing open behind me, but some one had gained ingress to the cellar by an opening of which I knew nothing.

I faced the stairway that led up to the back hall of the house when, to my astonishment, steps sounded behind me, and, turning, I saw a man carrying a lantern coming toward me. I marked his careless step; he was undoubtedly on familiar ground. As I watched him he paused, lifted the lantern to a level with his eyes and began sounding the outer corridor wall with a hammer.

Here, undoubtedly, was my friend Morgan—again! There was the same periodicity in the beat on the wall that I had heard in my own rooms. He began at the top and went methodically to the floor. I leaned against the wall where I stood and watched the slow approach of the lantern. The small revolver with which I had first fired at his flying figure in the wood was in my pocket. It was just as well to have it out with the fellow now. My chances were as good as his, though I confess I did not relish the thought of being found dead the next morning in the cellar of my own house. It pleased my humor to let him approach in this way, unconscious that he was watched, until I should thrust my pistol into his face.

His arms grew tired when he was about ten feet from me and he dropped the lantern and hammer to his side and swore under his breath impatiently.

Then he began again with greater zeal. As he came nearer I studied his face in the lantern's light with interest. His hat was thrust back, and I could see his jaw hard set under his blond beard.

He took a step nearer, ran his eyes over the wall and resumed his tapping, beginning close to the ceiling. In settling himself for the new series of strokes he swayed toward me slightly and I could hear his hard breathing. I was deliberating how best to throw myself upon him, but as I wavered he stepped back, swore at his ill luck and flung the hammer to the ground.

"Thanks!" I shouted, leaping forward and snatching the lantern. "Stand just where you are!"

With the revolver in my right hand and the lantern held high in my left, I enjoyed his utter consternation, as my voiced roared in the corridor.

"It's too bad we meet under such strange circumstances, Morgan," I said. "I'd begun to miss you; but I suppose you've been sleeping in your daytime to gather strength for your night prowling."

"You're a fool," he growled. "He was recovering from his fright—I knew it by the gleam of his teeth in his yellow beard. His eyes, too, were moving restlessly about. He undoubtedly knew the house better than I did, and was considering the best means of escape. I did not know what to do with him now that I had him at the point of a pistol; and in my ignorance of his motives and my vague surmise as to the agency back of him, I was filled with uncertainty."

"You needn't hold that thing quite so near," he said, starting at me coolly. "I'm glad it annoys you, Morgan," I said. "I want you to tell me how you got in here."

He laughed.

"I came in by the kitchen window, if you must know. I got in before your solemn jack-of-all-trades locked it up, and I walked down to the end of the passage there—he indicated the direction with a slight jerk of his head—"and slept until it was time to go to work."

"If you can't lie better than that you needn't try again. Face about, now, and march!"

I put new energy into my tone, and he turned and walked before me down the corridor in the direction from which he had come. We were, I dare say, a pretty pair—he tramping doggedly before me, I following at his heels with his lantern and my pistol.

"Not so fast," I admonished sharply.

"Excuse me," he replied mockingly. He was no common rogue; I felt the quality in him with a certain admiration for his scoundrelly talents.

I continued at his heels, poking the muzzle of the revolver against his back from time to time to keep him assured of my presence—a device that I was to regret a second later.

When we were, I should judge, about ten yards from the end of the corridor, at that moment I prodded him with the point of the revolver, he fell backward against me, threw his arms over his head and grasped me about the neck, meanwhile turning himself lithely until his fingers clasped my throat. The lantern fell from my hand and one or the other of us smashed it with our feet.

A wrestling match in that dark hole was not to my liking. I still held onto the revolver, waiting for a chance to use it, and meanwhile he tried to throw me, forcing me back against one side and then another of the corridor.

With a quick rush he flung me away, and in the same second I found



He Flung Me Away and in the Same Second I Fired.

The roar of the shot in the narrow corridor was deafening. I flung myself on the floor, expecting a return shot, and quickly enough a flash broke upon the darkness dead ahead, and I rose to my feet, fired again and leaped to the opposite side of the corridor and crouched there. We had adopted the same tactics, firing and dodging to avoid the target made by the flash of our pistols, and watching and listening after the roar of the explosions. It was a very pretty game, but not destined to last long. He was slowly retreating toward the end of the passage where there was, I remembered, a dead wall. His only chance was to crawl through an area window I knew to be there, and this would, I felt sure, give him into my hands.

After five shots apiece there was a truce. The pungent smoke of the powder caused me to cough, and he laughed.

"Have you swallowed a bullet, Mr. Glenarm?" he called.

I could hear his feet scraping on the cement floor; he was moving away from me, doubtless intending to fire when he reached the area window and escape before I could reach him. I crept warily after him, ready to fire on the instant, but not wishing to throw away my last cartridge.

He was now very near the end of the corridor. I heard his feet strike some boards that I remembered lay on the floor there, and I was nerved for a shot and a hand-to-hand struggle, if it came to that.

I was sure that he sought the window; I heard his hands on the wall as he felt for it. Then a breath of cold air swept the passage, and I knew that he must be drawing himself up to the opening. I fired and dropped to the floor. With the roar of the explosion I heard him yell, but the expected return shot did not follow.

The pounding of my heart seemed to mark the passing of hours. I feared my foe was playing some trick, creeping toward me, perhaps, to fire at close range, or to grapple with me in the dark. The cold air whistled into the corridor, and I began to feel the chill of it. Being fired upon is disagreeable enough, but waiting in the dark for the shot is intolerable. I rose and walked toward the end of the passage.

Then his revolver flashed and roared directly ahead, the flame of it so near that it blinded me and the wad of the cartridge burned and stung my cheek. I fell forward dazed and blinded, but sought myself together in a moment and got upon my feet. The draft of air no longer blew into the passage. Morgan had taken himself off through the window and closed it after him. I made sure of this by going to the window and feeling it with my hands.

I went back and groped about for my candle, which found without difficulty and lighted. I then returned to the window to examine the catch. To my utter astonishment it was fastened with staples, driven deep into the sash in such a way that it could not possibly have been opened without an expenditure of time and labor.

My eyes smarted from the smoke of the last shot, and my cheek stung where the wadding had struck my face. I was alive, but in my vexation and perplexity not, I fear, wholly grateful for my safety. It was, however, some consolation to feel sure I had winged the enemy.

I gathered up the fragments of Morgan's lantern and went back to the library. The lights in half the candlesticks had sputtered out. I extinguished the remainder and started to my room.

Then, in the great dark hall, I heard a muffled tread as of some one following me—not on the broad staircase, nor in any place I could identify—yet unmistakably on steps of some sort beneath or above me. My nerves were already keyed to a breaking pitch, and the ghost-like tread in the wall angered me. Morgan, or his ally, Bates, undoubtedly, O reflected, at some new trick. I ran into my room, found a heavy walking stick and set off for Bates' room on the third floor. It was always easy to attribute any sort of mischief to the fellow, and undoubtedly he was crawling through the house somewhere on an errand that boded no good to me.

It was now past two o'clock and he should have been asleep and out of the way long ago. I crept to his room and threw open the door without, I must say, the slightest idea of finding him there. But Bates, the enigma, Bates, the incomparable cook, the perfect servant, sat at a table, the light of several candles falling on a book over which he was bent with that maddening gravity he had never yet in my presence thrown off.

He rose at once, stood at attention, inclining his head slightly.

"Yes, Mr. Glenarm."

"Yes, Mr. Glenarm!" I roared at him.

astonished at finding him—sorry, I must say, that he was there! The stick fell from my hands. I did not doubt he knew perfectly well that I had some purpose in breaking in upon him. I was baffled and in my rage floundered for words to explain myself.

"I thought I heard some one in the house. I don't want you prowling about in the night, do you hear?" "Certainly not, sir," he replied in a pained tone.

I glanced at the book he had been reading. It was a volume of Shakespeare's comedies, open at the first scene of the last act of "Winter's Tale."

"Quite a pretty bit of work that, I should say," he remarked. "It was one of my late master's favorites."

"Go to the devil!" I bawled at him, and went down to my room and slammed the door in rage and chagrin.

(To Be Continued.)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Special Judge William Carnes issued an order in the Circuit Court at Jackson transferring to Elliott county the case against James Hargis and others, charged with the murder of Dr. D. B. Cox, although the Commonwealth entered vigorous protest, and finally withdrew its motion for a change. Hargis' attorney protested against a trial in Jackson, after the order sending the case to Elliott was entered, although but a few minutes before he had insisted on a trial in Hargis' home county. Judge Carnes' connection with the cases now comes unless he should again be appointed by Gov. Beckham.

Allany, Ky., March 6.—In Jackson Bottom, Russell county, the twelve-year-old son of Sam Perkins committed suicide by hanging himself. It is learned that the boy and a sister were playing and quarreled his mother scolded him for it, then he went and hung himself for being corrected.

The suggestion in the News for state aid in building roads continues to grow in strength and popularity with the people and the press. At the Farmers Institute at Shelbyville last week there was a unanimous demand on the part of those present in favor of the News proposition. Commissioner Vreeland said it would take a constitutional amendment to authorize the State to set aside a fund for this purpose, but he believed that the next Legislature would submit such an amendment to the people. If this is done it will carry with an overwhelming majority. It would be well to include in the proposed amendment a provision to permit the use of the convicts in the penitentiary to work the roads. A number of States are doing this with very satisfactory results.—Elizabethtown News.

H. d. Armstrong, of Flemingsburg, recently purchased in Missouri a pure white burro, or mule, with blue eyes. It is five years old only 23 inches tall.

Willis Bostain has a pet groundhog that upsets the old theory that he makes his first appearance on February 2. He went into his snug den last fall, and was not seen again until the morning of February 20. He came out on that morning, stood for a while on his hind feet, and seeing a dog, went into his den and has not been seen since.—Millersburg Item.

Important acts passed by the Fifty-Ninth Congress.

The railway rate law.

Lock canal at Panama; supplies to be domestic.

Oklahoma (including Indian Territory) admitted to the Union.

Pure food law.

Meat inspection.

Alcohol, for use in arts, freed of tax.

Congressional service reorganized on merit basis.

Quarantine against yellow fever nationalized.

National bank liabilities limited to 70 per cent of capital.

Alaska: Delegates allowed; aliens prohibited fishing.

Taxation of pure domestic sweet wines reduced.

Affairs of the five civilized Indian tribes finally settled.

Notice to Farmers.

D. J. Burett, Jr., will grind your corn for you for one-eighth toll. Will grind at any time. Fair treatment guaranteed. Bring in your corn. Store and mill opposite passenger depot.

Have you a BOY to clothe? Every mother who has a boy to buy for should have her name on our "Mother of Boys Directory." It furnishes you with the seasons latest styles in Boys wear from 2-12 to 17 years. It costs nothing. Send your name and address to G. A. Northcott and Co., Huntington, W. Va., Boys Dept.

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Niagara Falls and historic anti-Confederate soldiers graves of Confederate soldiers marked.

Santo Domingo, Morocco, Mexican boundary and American pecuniary claims arbitration treaties approved.

Immigration law revised.

Extradition law, defining citizenship and status of Americans married to foreigners.

General service pension law, embracing all soldiers sixty-two years of age.

National banks and corporations prohibited from contributing to political campaign funds.

Salary increases: Fifty per cent, a Vice President, Speaker, Congressmen and Cabinet members; all salaries of Ministers abroad formerly \$7,500 raised to \$10,000; postal clerks and carriers increased.

Railway employees' working hours limited.

Army: Artillery reorganized and enlarged; field batteries combined in six regiments and coast batteries constituted a corps; nearly \$100,000,000 appropriated for waterways improvement.

Navy: Two 20,000-ton battleships, two destroyers, \$3,000,000 for submarines.

Bills introduced: House 25,519; Senate, 8,655.

Cincinnati, March 5.—The last chapter in the history of the alleged head of Pearl Bryan, recently found, was closed this morning when the Newport police incinerated the skull by consigning it to the furnace under the big water heater in the basement of the city building.

The crematory exercises were not very solemn. The turning of the skull prevents any further work on the part of the volunteer detective brigade in an effort to discover how the skull happened to get into the sewer trench where it was found.

St. Sterling, Ky., March 9.—Tom ret, of Stanton, was tried before United States Commissioner Wood today on a charge of obstructing mail and assaulting Carrier Stephens. He was held to the United States Court at Richmond in the sum of \$500 bond.

Mayville, Ky., March 9.—Louis Robinson, an ex-slave, who was sold on the block fifty-six years ago at Prooksville, Bracken county, today made the announcement that on the anniversary Saturday, March 20, he will preach on the exact spot where he was auctioned off to the highest bidder. He is a negro that has the respect of this community.

Mrs. Virgil Hart, a bride of only six months, shot herself in the left breast at her home in Paducah. She told the attending physicians that it was done accidentally.

Cynthiana, Ky., March 9.—The Harrison county Democratic Committee ordered a primary election for Saturday, April 27, for the purpose of selecting the nominees for State Representative. Only two candidates have announced—M. S. Swinford, a former Representative and an attorney in Cynthiana, and J. W. Stump, a farmer. Both of the candidates have issued statements favoring the temperance movement and a lower railroad fare on the railroads in the State.

But Carnes, the sweet-scented general from Grant county, who was appointed Special Judge in the Harless case, has transferred the case on change of venue from Breathitt county to Elliott county. Elliott is one of the few counties in Kentucky which is without a mile of railroad and "Jedge" Carnes seems to want to get it as far up Blitter creek as possible.—Times-Democrat.

Notice to Farmers.

Have you a BOY to clothe? Every mother who has a boy to buy for should have her name on our "Mother of Boys Directory." It furnishes you with the seasons latest styles in Boys wear from 2-12 to 17 years. It costs nothing. Send your name and address to G. A. Northcott and Co., Huntington, W. Va., Boys Dept.

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